VI.—ECONOMIC ROUMANIA

AGRICULTURE.

311 MODERN ROUMANIA is essentially an agricultural state, as 162 was the Old Kingdom (43 to 46 per cent of the land being arable and 22 per cent forest, whilst over 80 per cent of the population of 18 millions are agricultural workers), although it has valuable potentialities for the development of industry.

132 ARRANGED in zones round the bastion of the southern and 241 eastern Carpathian highlands, the main agricultural regions 134 of post-war Roumania exhibit, according to aspect and altitude, a considerable variety of climatic conditions, which is reflected in a varying emphasis in the selection of crops raised. In general, we may say that the continental nature of the climate and the resulting succession from north to south and from highland to lowland of soils, graded from poor ashen-grey podsol in the Carpathians through oak-forest loams to a rich chernoziom in the south-eastern Danube plains, has resulted, wherever the ground is sufficiently level, in a concentration on grain production. The heavier rainfall of the uplands, the relatively great humidity and shelter from the driving winds that sweep across the open plains, coupled with the exposure of less [137] fertile rocks—granites and coarse sandstones—explains the large area of forested land (24.5 per cent, nearly 7¼ million hectares) in those districts that extend into the Carpathian highlands.

243 OF THE 13 odd million hectares of arable land, cereals occupy some 37 to 39 per cent. Production varies greatly from year to year and from district to district. In the old kingdom of Wallachia-Moldavia, maize is by far the heaviest crop, particularly in Oltenia, where the summer rainfall is heavier. It is also the heaviest crop in Transylvania, the cultivated areas under maize, wheat, barley and oats being [262] respectively 4, 3, 2 and 1 million hectares. Maize is the staple crop of the peasant holder almost throughout the country, for it not only provides the bread cakes and the "mamaliga," maize pudding, the main food of the mass of the people, but also fodder for the cattle to eke out the hay in

'2: Kormos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
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[Oltenia]

Kingdom is Wallachia, which is formed by Oltenia and Muntenia.

OLTENIA. Oltenia is the western part of the principality of Wallachia. Its boundaries are, in the west and north the Carpathians, in the east the River Olt, and in the south the Danube. The province covers an area of about 9,640 square miles and has a population of about 1,900,000. The soil of the sub-Carpathian hills consists of sand and clay and gravel and is well watered by numerous rivulets. Here are some densely populated valleys, bordered by rich forests and grazing grounds. Farther south and extending to the Danube lies the fertile plain composed of the rich 'yellow earth'. Its character is similar to that of the lowlands of Muntenia, but it lies on a higher level and also has a higher rainfall.

The richest district of this fertile province is the *judet*[1] of Dolj in the south-western corner of Oltenia. From here, and the similarly fertile *judets* of Mehedinti and Romanati, also on the northern bank of the Danube, high-quality maize and wheat have been exported for many years. From the hilly country farther north fruit is the chief export. In the mountainous districts forestry provides the main occupation for the local inhabitants. There is much sheep-breeding, for the grassy slopes provide good grazing.

Apart from the Danube the two most important rivers of Oltenia are the Jiu and the Olt; the latter rises in Transylvania and enters Oltenia through the Red Tower Pass. Oltenia is not rich in mineral resources. There is, however, oil at Govora, west of

[1] Administrative unit.

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[The Banat]

[The Crisana]

The high quality of the crops in this province, amongst them wheat, maize, rye, oats, and the high standard of animal breeding, have made the Banat known far beyond the borders of Rumania. The fertility of the soil is due partly to the 'black earth' which, in a greater or lesser degree, is a component of all the arable land. Apart from being an important agricultural region, the Banat possesses valuable industries, forests and minerals. Iron ore and coal are mined in the area of Resita and Anina, where there are great iron and steel works which produce railway equipment and armaments. The Danubian port of Orsova, guarding the western entrance to the 'Iron Gates', also has an oil refinery.

The capital of the Banat is Timisoara[R] (Temesvar[H]) on the Bega with a population of 100,000. In Roman times the fortress of Ripensia was situated here. In Hunyadi's time it was a centre of resistance against the Turks, only second in importance to Belgrade. To-day the town is a great rail and road junction with many factories, banks, commercial houses and cultural institutions. Lugoj, on the Timis, with a population of 20,000, and Caransebes, north of the Porta Orientalis which leads through the mountains of the Banat to the Danube, are marketing towns of some importance.

THE CRISANA AND MARAMURES. Geographically the Crisana is the eastern borderland of the Hungarian plain. The province covers an area of about 8,400 square miles and has a population of just under 1,500,000. The Crisana lies between Transylvania in the east, the River Mures (Maros[H]) in the south; Hungary (as reduced by the Treaty of the Trianon) in the west and Czechoslovakia in the north.

241 peasant views with suspicion and often hostility all attempts at improvements in traditional [474] methods. Even the co-operative societies have made less progress than in other Danubian countries. There is need for considerable capital expenditure in grouping small farms into larger units, in providing better buildings, more implements and fertilisers. There is need for diversification of production—more fodder crops and more animal husbandry. Above all, there is need for development in industry and commerce to provide work for the surplus agricultural population.

2. Natural Conditions and Regions

132 The climate is of the extreme Continental type, with long hot summers and severe winters. Precipitation is largely concentrated in winter and early summer. During the greater part of the growing and ripening season rains are light, and from time to time serious droughts occur which may ruin the grain crops.

133 The agricultural regions correspond to the natural divisions into plain and hill country—the 311 Danube plain and Bessarabia which comprise the greater part of the territory and produce the bulk of the crops, and the hilly and mountainous land of Transylvania and the Bucovina.

The plain is well-suited for agriculture, the soil over much of it being of the fertile *chernozem* or [134] black earth type, but the backward methods of farming and the light rainfall keep yields per acre low.

This region is not equally backward in all parts. The Rumanian Banat at the western end of the country, and formerly part of Hungary, is more prosperous and progressive. The population is [162] not purely Rumanian but includes Swabians and Saxons, descendants of the German stock systematically settled there, on medium-sized peasant holdings in the eighteenth century after the cession of the territory to Austria by the Turks. Methods and yields, by Rumanian standards, are good. [231] The livestock density is higher than the average and the area produces a substantial surplus of pigs. Rural overcrowding is not as marked as elsewhere.

241 Conditions of life and methods of farming are 133 considerably worse in the plain land of the Old Kingdom. Agriculture here is as primitive as in any part of Eastern Europe, depending on an unbroken alternation of wheat and maize cultivation with little subsidiary production. Some wheat is marketed, but the maize is grown largely [311] for consumption on the farms. So little land is available per head of population that the farm population and working animals (which eat the maize stalks) can be fed only by devoting an excessive acreage to maize.

Bessarabia makes up the remainder of the plain land; conditions of settlement and farming methods are much the same as in the Old Kingdom, but the density of population is lower and there are substantial grain exports.

Given normal yields, every district of the plain area is at least self-sufficient in foodstuffs; indeed parts of it regularly produce large grain surpluses. Transitional areas between the Danube Valley and the Transylvanian plateau, such as the Carpatho-Moldavia and Carpatho-Muntenia areas, may,

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